STEVE ROGERS CAPTAIN AMERICA

SPENCER • GUINALDO • BACHS • ROSENBERG

MARVEL

#17

Super-Soldier. Avenger. Agent of Hydra. He is...

Steve Rogers
CAPTAIN AMERICA

A Cosmic Cube transformed Steve Rogers, Captain America, into the ultimate Hydra sleeper agent. After months of careful manipulation, Steve Rogers took control of S.H.I.E.L.D. and used a moment of international crisis to claim the country for Hydra.

Inhumans are closely monitored, and mutants have been relocated to a homeland in New Tian. Earth's most powerful heroes are stranded beyond Earth's Planetary Defense Shield, at the mercy of a Chitauri invasion--or trapped inside the Darkforce bubble that envelops New York City. The handful of heroes that remain plot against Captain America from a hidden base near Las Vegas--a fact that caused Hydra High Command to bomb the city into oblivion.

*This issue takes place after SECRET EMPIRE #2.

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MY NAME IS **SALLY FLOYD.** I'M A REPORTER, A RECOVERING ALCOHOLIC, AND A MOTHER WHO LOST HER DAUGHTER.

TRUTH IS, NOBODY CARES ABOUT ANY OF THAT. ALL THAT MATTERS ABOUT ME IS THIS--

--I'M THE WOMAN WHO INTERVIEWED **CAPTAIN AMERICA.**

IT HAPPENED DURING THE FIRST **SUPER HERO CIVIL WAR,** WHEN HE WAS FIGHTING IRON MAN OVER THE REGISTRATION ACT.

BUT WHAT NOBODY REMEMBERS IS--I ACTUALLY TALKED TO HIM **TWICE...**

...ONCE IN THE **MIDDLE** OF THE **WAR,** WHEN HE WAS DEFIANT, ITCHING FOR A FIGHT. THE SECOND TIME--

--NOT SO MUCH. HE WAS DEFEATED, CONTRITE AND BROKEN. AND IN RESPONSE--

--I **HUMILIATED** HIM.

SUGGESTED HE WAS **OUTDATED,** OUT OF TOUCH. ASKED HIM IF HE KNEW WHAT **TWITTER** WAS.

HE AND HIS SUPPORTERS DIDN'T MUCH CARE FOR THAT.

SO WHEN CAPTAIN AMERICA'S PEOPLE REACHED OUT AND ASKED ME IF I'D BE INTERESTED IN DOING ANOTHER INTERVIEW, I WAS ***SURPRISED***, TO PUT IT MILDLY. BUT THEN--

--A LOT HAS CHANGED.

WE'RE LIVE IN ONE MINUTE, SALLY--

MS. FLOYD--

--EXCITING, ISN'T IT? AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH THE ***HYDRA SUPREME*** HIMSELF. I'M SURE THE TWO OF YOU HAVE MUCH TO DISCUSS--

I'M SURE WE DO AS WELL, ***DOCTOR FAUSTUS***-- GIVEN HOW FEW INTERVIEWS, PRESS CONFERENCES, OR EVEN PUBLIC STATEMENTS THE HYDRA LEADERSHIP HAS MADE SINCE TAKING POWER.

YES, OF COURSE. HE'S A BIT ***SHY***. BUT OUR AGREEMENT STILL STANDS.

WE WANT THIS TO BE A FREE-WHEELING CONVERSATION, NOTHING OFF-LIMITS.

THERE IS ONE SMALL LAST-MINUTE EXCEPTION, HOWEVER--

--THERE WILL BE NO QUESTIONS ABOUT LAS VEGAS.

WHICH IS A PROBLEM--

--BECAUSE VEGAS IS *ALL* ANYONE WANTS TO TALK ABOUT.

DAYS AGO, STEVE ROGERS ADDRESSED THE NATION. AND WHILE HE SPOKE--

--HYDRA WARSHIPS FILLED THE SKIES OVER THE CITY.

To Fabulous LAS VEGAS NEVADA

THEY RAINED *DEATH* AND *DESTRUCTION* ON EVERYONE BELOW--

--WHILE THE HYDRA SUPREME SPOKE OF *PEACE* AND *ORDER.*

HE REASSURED THE NATION AND PROMISED A BETTER TOMORROW--

--EVEN IF SO MANY WOULD NEVER LIVE TO SEE IT.

NEEDLESS TO SAY, I'D LIKE TO ASK HIM ABOUT THAT.

BUT INSTEAD--

GOOD EVENING, I'M ***SALLY FLOYD*** AND YOU'RE WATCHING ***FRONTLINE LIVE.*** TONIGHT I'M JOINED BY A SPECIAL GUEST.

IN HIS FIRST EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW SINCE TAKING CONTROL OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, THE HYDRA SUPREME--

--CAPTAIN AMERICA, STEVE ROGERS.

THANK YOU FOR HAVING ME, SALLY. BUT BEFORE WE BEGIN, I'D LIKE TO SET THE RECORD STRAIGHT ON SOMETHING.

I DIDN'T "TAKE CONTROL" OF ANYTHING. I WAS APPOINTED BY THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT AS ***EMERGENCY INTERIM EXECUTIVE*** BY WAY OF THE S.H.I.E.L.D. ACT--

WHICH THEY NEVER WOULD HAVE INVOKED IF THEY'D KNOWN YOUR ALLEGIANCE TO ***HYDRA.***

THEN THAT WOULD'VE BEEN ***THEIR*** MISTAKE.

"THE ***STRENGTH OF HYDRA*** IS WHAT SAVED THIS NATION IN ITS DARKEST HOUR. WHEN ITS SO-CALLED HEROES DEVOURED EACH OTHER TO THE POINT WHERE THEY COULD NO LONGER STAND AGAINST ITS ENEMIES...

"...***THAT*** IS WHEN HYDRA STEPPED INTO THE BREACH--

"--WHEN IT PROVED ITSELF ***WORTHY.***"

SO IF THESE ELECTED "LEADERS" WOULD CHOOSE TO GO BACK TO THE CHAOS THAT PRECEDED HYDRA'S HELP, PERHAPS THE COUNTRY COULD DO WITHOUT ***THEM,*** AS WELL.

I SEE. AND WHERE ARE THESE ELECTED LEADERS NOW?

AS WE'VE SAID COUNTLESS TIMES, SAFE IN PROTECTIVE CUSTODY UNTIL THE STATE OF EMERGENCY HAS PASSED.

BUT THAT'S JUST THE THING, ISN'T IT?

"THE PLANETARY DEFENSE SHIELD REMAINS UP, SO THE CHITAURI FLEET CAN'T GET THROUGH.

"NEW YORK IS STILL TRAPPED IN THE DARKFORCE DIMENSION, BUT THE SITUATION HAS STABILIZED."

IT WOULD SEEM AS THOUGH THE EMERGENCY ***HAS*** PASSED.

I COULDN'T DISAGREE MORE. LOOK AT THE STATE THIS COUNTRY WAS IN.

NOT JUST THE CRIME, THE CORRUPTION, THE STAGNATION--

--BUT THE ***FEAR***. PEOPLE NO LONGER FELT SAFE. SEEMINGLY EVERY WEEK UNDER THE OLD REGIME, THERE WAS SOME ATTACK BY SOME GRAVE THREAT, EACH ONE WORSE THAN THE LAST.

AND THAT'S NOT EVEN GETTING INTO THE THREATS LURKING RIGHT NEXT DOOR.

YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT THE ***INHUMANS.*** GOOD--

"--LET'S TALK ABOUT THE *CAMPS.*"

NEW ATTILAN INHUMAN HOLDING CENTER.

GREETINGS, GREETINGS, FRESH ARRIVALS-- TO NEW ATTILAN.

I AM YOUR WARDEN, MR. HYDE. I WANT TO PERSONALLY WELCOME EACH AND EVERY ONE OF YOU.

I UNDERSTAND YOU MAY HAVE MANY CONCERNS, AND I LOOK FORWARD TO HEARING THEM--

AFTER ALL, PERSONAL ATTENTION IS MY SPECIALTY. YES--

--WE ARE GOING TO HAVE THE MOST DELIGHTFUL TIME TOGETHER, YOU AND I.

HERE--

--LET ME HELP. YOU ARE ***NEW*** HERE, YES? WHAT IS YOUR NAME?

IT IS NICE TO MEET YOU, BRIAN. I AM NAJA. HOW ARE YOU FEELING?

BRIAN

SCARED!

I UNDERSTAND. BUT PERHAPS IF YOU HAVE A ***FRIEND,*** IT WILL MAKE THINGS SEEM BETTER. OF COURSE IT WILL--WHAT AM I SAYING?

NOW COME--

"--IT IS TIME SOMEONE GAVE YOU A ***TOUR.***"

I KNOW BEING HERE IS FRIGHTENING--BUT YOU SHOULD KNOW, HOPE STILL EXISTS HERE--WE SURVIVE AND CARRY ON.

IN THE FACE OF ALL THIS CRUELTY AND MALICE, WE HOLD TO OUR ***FAMILY***. OUR LOVE AND LOYALTY TO EACH OTHER.

WE ***LOOK OUT*** FOR ONE ANOTHER, ***CARE*** FOR ONE ANOTHER--

--AND WE PRAY.

FOR THE RETURN OF THOSE WHO WILL SAVE US--OUR ***ROYAL FAMILY***-- AND FOR STRENGTH, FOR OUR LEADER HERE ON EARTH--

"--***ISO***, WHO SPEAKS FOR ALL ***INHUMANS***."

I'VE INSPECTED THESE HOLDING CENTERS MYSELF. THEY ARE MODELS OF HUMANE AND DIGNIFIED TREATMENT--

WITH ALL DUE RESPECT, SIR-- THE FAMILIES OF THOSE BEING HELD SEEM TO DISAGREE.

AND I'D POINT YOU TO THE FAMILIES OF THOSE WHO ***LOST*** SOMEONE DUE TO AN INHUMAN'S POWERS.

LET'S BE CLEAR HERE--WE'RE TALKING ABOUT THE BYPRODUCT OF AN ***ALIEN RACE,*** ONE WITH VIEWS INCOMPATIBLE WITH MODERN SOCIETY AND A HISTORY OF VIOLENCE AGAINST HUMANITY--

--AND PEOPLE WERE BEING ASKED TO LIVE NEXT DOOR TO THAT, ***ACCEPT*** THAT, PUT THEIR LIVES AND THE LIVES OF THOSE THEY LOVE AT RISK.

SO I DON'T THINK HYDRA'S TEMPORARY SOLUTION--WHICH IS TO KEEP THESE UNFORTUNATE VICTIMS OF ALIEN MANIPULATION IN A ***SECURE FACILITY*** UNTIL WE CAN DEVISE A ***BETTER*** PLAN-- IS AN ***UNREASONABLE*** ONE.

SOME HAVE SUGGESTED A ***SEPARATE TERRITORY,*** AKIN TO THE MUTANTS WITH NEW TIAN--

EXCUSE ME, MS. FLOYD--

--AS YOU KNOW, OUR GOVERNMENT DOES NOT RECOGNIZE NEW TIAN AS ANYTHING OF THE SORT.

NOT ***OFFICIALLY***--BUT YOU ARE, OF COURSE, AWARE OF THE A COMMON RUMOR THAT HYDRA ALLOWED MUTANTS TO SETTLE THERE AS A COMPROMISE SOLUTION.

PEOPLE SAY MANY THINGS--

--BUT LET ME ASSURE YOU, THE TERRITORY THOSE MUTANTS HAVE INVADED AND SUBJUGATED RIGHTFULLY BELONGS TO THE ***UNITED STATES.*** WE DO NOT RECOGNIZE THEIR REGIME, AND WE DEMAND THEIR IMMEDIATE ***SURRENDER.***

ANY SUGGESTION THAT HYDRA HAD ANYTHING TO DO WITH THEIR ILLEGAL OCCUPATION--

"--IS A LIE."

MADRIPOOR. BEFORE THE HYDRA NATION.

HELLO, MAGNETO.

THERE'S SOMETHING I'D LIKE TO *DISCUSS* WITH YOU.

YOU DON'T SEEM SURPRISED.

THAT FLAG YOU DRAPE YOURSELF IN HAS NEVER MEANT ANYTHING GOOD FOR ME OR MY PEOPLE, CAPTAIN. HUMANS ALWAYS PRETEND THESE REGIMES THEY CREATE ARE SO VITAL AND CHERISHED BY THEM--

--BUT THEY'LL WAVE A FLAG OF ANY COLOR AND BURN THEIR OLD ONE IF IT GIVES THEM MORE POWER TO OPPRESS THOSE THEY ***HATE.***

BUT THAT'S JUST IT, ERIK. I'M NOT HERE PROMISING OPPRESSION. JUST THE ***OPPOSITE,*** ACTUALLY...

WHAT IS THIS?

A TREATY. AND A MAP.

NEW TIAN...

A SOVEREIGN, INDEPENDENT COUNTRY, TO BE RULED BY MUTANTS AS THEY SEE FIT. WITH TERRITORY THAT INCLUDES A SIZEABLE PORTION OF WHAT'S NOW CALIFORNIA.

WHY? WHY WOULD YOU DO THIS?

WE ARE GOING TO FACE AN ***ENORMOUS*** AMOUNT OF ***RESISTANCE.*** I CAN'T ADD A WAR WITH MUTANTS ON TOP OF EVERYTHING ELSE. THIS IS MY WAY OF GETTING YOU OFF THE BOARD--MY WAY OF ***DEFEATING*** YOU--

--BY GIVING YOU ***EVERYTHING YOU WANT.***

I'M SURE YOU'LL EXPECT SOMETHING IN RETURN.

YOUR ***ABSENCE.*** ONCE NEW TIAN IS ESTABLISHED, NO MUTANTS WILL STEP FOOT ON UNITED STATES SOIL UNLESS I GRANT THEM A PERSONAL EXCEPTION. AND THOSE WILL BE RARE.

HYDRA WILL NOT BE INDULGING ANY MORE FANTASIES OF PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE. YOU WILL HAVE YOUR NATION, MAGNETO, AND WE WILL HAVE OURS.

AND YOU BELIEVE YOUR PEOPLE WILL TOLERATE THIS? YOUR FIRST SHOW OF STRENGTH WILL BE SURRENDERING YOUR OWN LAND?

THERE WILL BE AN ATTACK. ***MULTIPLE*** ATTACKS.

AND ON THAT SAME DAY, MUTANT REVOLUTIONARIES WILL CLAIM THE TERRITORY IN QUESTION--IT'LL BE BLAMED ON THE COLLAPSE OF THE PREVIOUS GOVERNMENT.

HH. THIS IS A ***TRAP,*** THEN--THE MOMENT YOU COME TO POWER, A CONFLICT BETWEEN THE TWO NATIONS WILL BE INEVITABLE.

OF COURSE. HYDRA'S OFFICIAL POSITION WILL BE THAT MUTANT OCCUPATION OF THE REGION IS ***ILLEGAL***. BUT GIVEN THE ENORMITY OF THE THREAT, IT WILL BE ***YEARS*** BEFORE THE SITUATION DEGRADES INTO ARMED CONFLICT.

IMAGINE WHAT YOU COULD BUILD IN THE MEANTIME.

I SEE. AND I SUPPOSE YOU WANT ***ME*** TO LEAD THIS NEW NATION?

NO, ACTUALLY--

"--WE HAVE ***SOMEONE ELSE*** IN MIND FOR THAT."

ALL I NEED IS FOR YOU TO STAY HERE--***HIDING,*** PRESUMED DEAD.

DO THAT, AND YOU MUTANTS WILL GET YOUR WISH. YOU'VE ALWAYS BLAMED HUMANITY FOR ALL YOUR PROBLEMS--

--I IMAGINE THIS WILL PRESENT YOU WITH SOME ***NEW*** POSSIBILITIES.

HH. A DEAL WITH THE DEVIL, AND HE DOESN'T EVEN BOTHER TO ***LIE***. I SHOULD BE ***INSULTED***, YES?

I'VE SEEN ENOUGH OF YOUR EVIL TO KNOW YOU'RE INCAPABLE OF ***TRUST***, ERIK--

--BUT I DID WANT TO GIVE YOU SOMETHING, AS A TOKEN OF MY SINCERITY. IT'S A TROPHY I WOULD VERY MUCH HAVE LIKED TO KEEP FOR MYSELF--

--BUT I HAVE NO DOUBT YOU'LL TAKE GOOD CARE OF IT IN MY STEAD.

CONSIDER MY OFFER, MAGNETO. XAVIER'S DREAM HAS FAILED--

"--BUT *MINE* IS JUST BEGINNING."

LET'S MOVE ON TO SOMETHING ELSE MANY VIEWERS MIGHT HAVE SOME SKEPTICISM ABOUT.

THE GREAT ILLUSION.

YOU CLAIM THAT HYDRA WAS ACTUALLY ***VICTORIOUS*** IN WORLD WAR II, DESPITE ALL RECORDS SHOWING HYDRA DIDN'T EVEN EMERGE IN EUROPE UNTIL ***AFTER*** THE WAR.

YOU CLAIM THAT'S BECAUSE THE ALLIED POWERS ***CHANGED TIME,*** OR ***REALITY,*** OR ***PERCEPTION***--YOU'RE NOT CLEAR--TO MAKE PEOPLE BELIEVE SOMETHING ELSE ENTIRELY.

THAT'S RIGHT. TO MAKE EVERYONE THINK ***THEY*** HAD WON THE WAR.

AND HOW THEY DID THAT--

IS ***CLASSIFIED,*** I'M AFRAID.

AND YET-- YOU EXPECT PEOPLE TO BUY INTO THIS?

I DON'T EXPECT ***ANYTHING***--I SEE IT EVERY DAY.

PEOPLE ARE RESPONDING TO THE TRUTH. THEY KNEW THERE WAS SOMETHING OFF, SOMETHING BROKEN ABOUT THIS SOCIETY.

UNDERSTANDING THE ATROCITY THAT WAS COMMITTED HAS HELPED THEM REALIZE THAT THE THINGS THEY KNEW IN THEIR HEARTS WERE NEVER WRONG TO BEGIN WITH.

THAT YOU HAD ***LIED*** TO THEM.

SORRY? ***ME?***

YOU AND THE OTHERS IN YOUR SO-CALLED PROFESSION. SO OUT OF TOUCH WITH REALITY, SO DEEPLY BIASED IN YOUR WORLDVIEW, THAT YOU CAN'T SEE PAST THE DECEPTION. IN FACT--

--YOU'D DEFEND IT WITH YOUR LIFE.

SIR--I'M SORRY BUT-- IT'S NOT JUST ***JOURNALISTS.*** HISTORIANS, SCIENTISTS--

YOU MEAN SCIENTISTS LIKE ***TONY STARK*** OR ***HANK PYM?*** THE KINDS OF MEN WHO PUT LIVES AT RISK SO MANY TIMES WITH THEIR CORRUPTION AND COWARDICE?

IT'S EASY TO UNDERSTAND WHY YOU DON'T WANT TO BELIEVE THE TRUTH-- IT'S WHERE YOU GET YOUR ***POWER.***

BUT DON'T BE SURPRISED WHEN OTHERS AREN'T SO QUICK TO AGREE.

WHAT YOU'VE DONE IN THE DECADES SINCE THE GREAT ILLUSION IS FORCE-FEED THEM PROPAGANDA, MANIPULATE THEM, AND ISOLATE THEM--

--AND NOW YOU'RE SURPRISED WHEN THEY'RE WILLING TO BELIEVE ***ME*** INSTEAD OF ***YOU?***

SOME BELIEVE YOU--SOME ENTHUSIASTICALLY ***SUPPORT*** YOU, NO QUESTION--BUT THERE ARE OTHERS--

YES, ***OTHERS.*** THEY'RE ALL YOU EVER WANT TO TALK ABOUT. THE THREATS, THE DISSIDENTS, THE SUBVERSIVES, THE UNDERGROUND.

YOU ***REFUSE*** TO TALK ABOUT THE PEOPLE WHO ***MATTER.*** THE ONES WHO ARE NOW ***BENEFITING--***

"--THE PEOPLE ON ASSEMBLY LINES, BUILDING ***DREADNOUGHTS***-- FINALLY WORKING AGAIN AFTER YEARS OF ECONOMIC DISTRESS.

"THE ***WARSHIPS*** KEEPING OUR CITIES SAFE FROM ABOVE--

"--WHILE THE ***AMERICOPS*** DO THE SAME ON THE STREETS--

"--AND OUR HYDRA ***SOLDIERS*** PROTECT US FROM THREATS BEYOND OUR BORDERS."

WE HAVE NEVER BEEN STRONGER.

WITH ALL DUE RESPECT, SIR--THAT'S ***NONSENSE.***

EXCUSE ME?

WE BOTH KNOW MANIPULATING AN ECONOMY AND PROVOKING WAR ARE THE TWO OLDEST TRICKS IN THE BOOK WHEN IT COMES TO CONSOLIDATING POWER.

THE REAL TEST IS HOW YOU TREAT THE MOST VULNERABLE AMONG US--

WE'LL HAVE TO DISAGREE ON WHO HAS BEEN ***VULNERABLE*** HERE--

PRISON CAMPS. MEDIA CENSORSHIP. PROFILING.

MILLIONS OF PEOPLE BACK TO WORK, THE COUNTRY FINALLY SAFE--

WHAT ABOUT THE EROSION OF BEDROCK PRINCIPLES-- PERSONAL LIBERTY AND FREEDOM, ***EQUALITY***--

WHAT YOU HAD BEFORE WAS ANYTHING ***BUT*** EQUAL. NOW I LOOK ALL ACROSS THIS COUNTRY, AND I SEE PEOPLE PROUDLY SAYING "HAIL HYDRA"--

EXCEPT THE ONES IN ***LAS VEGAS***, YOU MEAN.

PLEASE STAND BY

WE'RE DONE HERE.

HEY-- WHAT--WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU *DOING*?!

YOU WERE GIVEN THE PARAMETERS OF OUR DISCUSSION, AND YET YOU *VIOLATED* THEM. AND IN THE PROCESS, YOU COMPROMISED NATIONAL SECURITY--

NATIONAL SECURITY?! YOU *BOMBED* AN AMERICAN CITY-- THE CASUALTIES ARE--

TAKE HER AWAY.

YOU CAN'T *DO* THIS! YOU CAN'T JUST ARREST A JOURNALIST FOR ASKING A *QUESTION!* PEOPLE WILL FIND OUT ABOUT THIS--

I'M SURE YOU'RE *RIGHT,* MS. FLOYD--

--I IMAGINE PEOPLE ON TWITTER WILL BE FURIOUS.

YOU KNOW WHAT THE *FUNNIEST* PART IS?

HE WASN'T *WRONG.*

PLENTY OF PEOPLE WERE HAPPY TO SAY "HAIL HYDRA."

THAT'S HOW MUCH THEY'D COME TO *HATE* PEOPLE LIKE ME--

--AND HOW MUCH THEY *TRUSTED* A CHARISMATIC LEADER LIKE *HIM.*

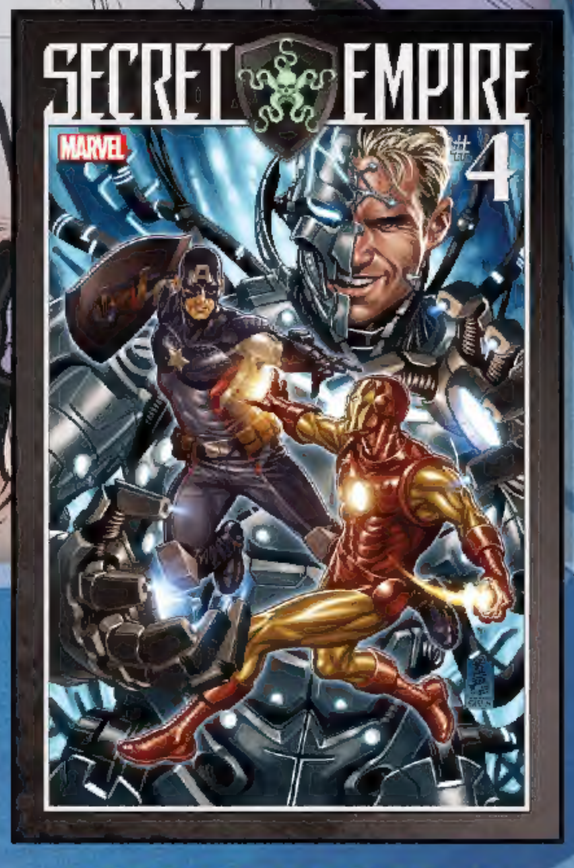
SO THAT WAS MY THIRD INTERVIEW WITH CAPTAIN AMERICA. SAD TO SAY--

--IT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE I'LL GET A CHANCE AT A FOURTH.

DOESN'T MEAN I DON'T STILL HAVE SOME *QUESTIONS.*

NEXT

SECRET EMPIRE #3



SECRET EMPIRE #4

ZONE